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MON-RTSE-PA KUN-DGA'-DPAL-LDAN

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A GOLDEN ROSARY OF LIVES OF EMINENT GURUS

Compiled by *MON-RTSE-PA KUN-DGA'-DPAL-LDAN*

and

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Introduction

Among the classificatory types into which Tibetan historical literature may be divided, the *gser-'phreng* is one of the least known. An eminent Western Tibetologist has in a recent publication translated *gser-'phreng* as "Golden Rosary", a rendering which is rather unilluminating in spite of the exactness of the literal translation. Probably intended originally to explain a *bla-brgyud gsol-'debs*, the reverential petition to the successive gurus in a transmission lineage of an esoteric teaching, such collections of hagiographical writing often enshrine some of the most cherished instructions (*man-ngag*)[1] of a tradition. These *gser-'phreng*, like biographies (*rnam-thar*) of individual lamas, can also serve as some of our most reliable sources of historical data.

It seems probable that the *gser-'phreng* originated among the 'Brug-pa and Stag-lung traditions in which *bla-mchod* (*gurupūjā*) and *rnam-thar* as liturgical and contemplative practices reached their highest degree of elaboration. *Gser-'phreng*, however, are by no means confined to the Dkar-brgyud-pa schools. The Sde-dge redaction of the *Lam 'bras slob bshad* collection contains seven volumes of biographies of the gurus in the transmission of the Lam-'bras system of the Sa-skya-pa sect. Vostrikov[2] has described similar works for the Dge-lugs-pa Lam-rim transmissions. It is undeniable, however, that the one-volume *gser-'phreng* was especially popular with the early Dkar-brgyud-pa scholars and yogis.

The manuscript reproduced in this volume of the *Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod* is a late 15th century *gser-'phreng* of the 'Ba'-ra "branch" of the 'Brug-pa Dkar-brgyud-pa. *Gser-'phreng* of other lineages within the Dkar-brgyud-pa tradition are known : xylograph editions existed for those of the Lho 'Brug (Rwa-lung)[3] and Shangs-pa[4]. A manuscript of one for the 'Bri-gung-pa sect has recently come to light[5]. The *gser-'phreng* of the Stag-lung-pa is certainly not lost. It is likely that

1. Prof. H.V. Guenther (*The Royal Song of Saraha; a study in the history of Buddhist thought*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1969, p. 30) has translated *man-ngag* (*upadeśa*) as "significant communication". He quotes the first Karma-'phrin-las : "*man-ngag* means to point out an important topic in a few words, or to elucidate the meaning of existence by having singled out the means of its understanding".
2. Vostrikov, A.I. *Tibetskaia Istoricheskaia Literatura*. Moskow, Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962, pp 109-111.
3. See Lokesh Chandra : *The Life of the Saint of Grsaṅ*. New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1969, introd., pp. 32-36, for an outline of the contents of a Spungs-thang (Punakha) print of the *Bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* of the Bhutanese transmission of the Bar 'Brug (Rwa-lung). This will be reproduced as volume XI of this series.
4. The Dpal-spungs (?) edition of the Shangs-pa *gser-'phreng* is scheduled to appear as volume XV of this series.
5. To be published as volume X of the series.

manuscripts for other lineages will eventually appear. It may be helpful to present a brief survey of the Dkar-brgyud-pa schools in order that the reader might understand the relationship of the present manuscript to the entire tradition.

The two most basic divisions of the BKA'-BRGYUD-PA or DKAR-BRGYUD-PA[6] traditions are the SHANGS-PA and the MAR-PA. The first originated with Khyung-po rnal-'byor, who received the profound methods of the siddhas of India from the lady Ni-gu-ma, spouse of Nāropa, the ḍākinī Sukhasiddhī, Maitrīpāda, and over a hundred other tantric masters. The lineages emanating from Khyung-po rnal-'byor specialize in the *Phyag chen Ga'u ma* and the *Ni gu chos drug*[7]. Since a *Dkar brgyud gser 'phreng* belonging to a Shangs-pa transmission will soon appear in this series, we shall pass directly on to the schools which treasured the esoteric instructions and teachings which Mar-pa translated and propagated in Tibet.

THE MAR-PA BKA'-BRGYUD-PA

The esoteric initiations and practical instructions upheld by all the extant lineages have passed through Tilopa and Nāropa to the Tibetan translator, Mar-pa Chos-kyi-blo-gros (1012-1097). Tradition records that Tilopa received four distinct currents (*bka'-babs*) which he passed on to Nāropa ; unfortunately Tibetan sources

6. A note is in order regarding the two forms Bka'-brgyud-pa and Dkar-brgyud-pa. The term Bka'-brgyud-pa applies to any line of transmission of an esoteric system from teacher to disciple. One can properly speak of a Jo-nang Bka'-brgyud-pa and Dge-ldan Bka'-brgyud-pa for the Jo-nang-pa and Dge-lugs-pa sects. The adherents of sects which practice the teachings centering around the *Phyag rgya chen po* and *Nā ro chos drug* are commonly referred to as the Dwags-po Bka'-brgyud-pa since these teachings were all transmitted through Sgam-po-pa. Similar teachings and practices centering around the *Ni gu chos drug* are distinctive of the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa. These two traditions with their offshoots are often loosely referred to simply as Bka'-brgyud-pa.

   Some of the more careful Tibetan scholars suggested that the term Dkar-brgyud-pa be used as a general term for the Dwags-po Bka'-brgyud-pa, Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa, and a few minor traditions transmitted by Nāropa, Mar-pa, Mi-la-ras-pa, or Ras-chung which did not pass through Sgam-po-pa. The Dkar-brgyud-pa alludes to the use of the white cotton meditation garment by all these lineages. This complex is what is normally inaccurately known as the Bka'-brgyud-pa.

   Compare Thu'u-bkwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma (*Grub mtha' Shel gyi me long*. Edited by Ngawang Gelek Demo, Delhi, 1969, p. 122) :

   [dang po ni dus phyis kyi 'brug pa'i yi ge 'ga' zhig nas mar mi dang] gling ras pa sogs na bza' ras dkar gsol ba tsam la bsams nas dkar brgyud ces bris pa'ang snang mod] bka' brgyud ces yongs su grags pa 'thad de].

7. Thu'u-bkwan (ibid., p. 126) describes the chief teachings of the Shangs-pa Dkar-brgyud-pa :

   [shangs chos gtso bor gyur pa ni] bde mchog] kyai rdor] ma hā ma ya] gsang 'dus] rdo rje 'jigs byed de rgyud sde lnga'i so so'i dbang dang] sdom pa'i dbang] sgyu 'us dbang mo che] mkha' spyod bka' lnga] ni gu'i chos drug] sgyu ma lam rim] 'chi med 'khrid 'khor] lam 'khyer su kha'i skor sogs] phyag chen ga'u ma] ye shes mgon po'i chos skor] bde mchog lha lnga] phag mo gsang sgrub] spyan ras gzigs] rnam 'joms] phyag rdor] mi g.yo ba sogs kyi dbang bka'] skyer sgang lugs kyi spyan ras gzigs dang rta mgrin sogs te] grub mtha' thams cad la khyab che'o].

differ considerably as to the lineage and content of each of these currents[8].

Mar pa's most famous disciple was Mi-la ras-pa, through whom the main tradition passed. Another of Mar pa's students, Rngog-ston Chos-sku-rdo-rje who excelled in the exegesis of the tantras themselves, began a tradition that remained for at least five generations a separate and identifiable transmission: the RNGOG BKA' BRGYUD-PA with its center at Gzhung Spre'u-zhing in southern Tibet[9].

MI LA RAS-PA AND HIS DISCIPLES

Mi-la ras pa was Mar-pa's disciple who surpassed all in perseverance and the practice of *gtum mo*. His two chief disciples were Dwags-po-pa (1079-1153) and Ras-chung Rdo-rje-grags (1083-1161). The main tradition passed through Dwags-po-pa, while Ras-chung fostered the RAS-CHUNG-SNYAN RGYUD. Ras-chung was sent to India by his guru to seek the esoteric precepts that had not been received by Mar-pa. On his return he bestowed the initiations he had received from Li-pu-pa (Paravatapāda) upon his guru Mi-la ras-pa, in turn, conferred them upon Ngan-rdzong ras pa Byang chub-rgya.-po who began the NGAN-RDZONG-SNYAN-RGYUD. These systems of oral precepts were ultimately elaborated into the BDE-MCHOG SNYAN RGYUD by Gtsang-smyon He-ru-ka (1452-1507). These teachings ultimately penetrated the other Dkar-brgyud-pa traditions, notably the Stod Brug, the lineages were absorbed and ceased to have any sectarian identity.

DWAGS-PO LHA-RJE AND THE CHE BZHI

Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams rin-chen (1079-1153) of Dwags-po had studied with Bka'-gdams-pa gurus, exponents of monastic sm and the systematic approach, before he came to Mi-la-ras-pa. He was, therefore eminently qualified to become the real founder of the Mar-pa Dkar-brgyud pa school. It is appropriate that all of the schools collectively are known as the DWAGS-PO BKA'-BRGYUD-PA. Sgam po-pa passed on the monastery that he founded to his nephew, Dwags-po Sgom tshul or Tshul khrims snying po (1116-1169). The Dwags-po Bka' brgyud-pa proper became identified with the master's monastery and lineage.

The founders of all of the four greater branches (*che-bzhi*) of the Dwags-po

8 The *gser phreng* reproduced here is in almost complete agreement with the account given by Rgya-dbang Kun-dga'-dpal-'byor (1428-1476) in the *Dkar brgyud chos 'byung* Punakha edition, f 2r.
(a) Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i bka'-babs Phyag-na-rdo-rje, Bram-ze Sa-ra-ha, Lo-ha-pa, Dha-ri-ka-pa Dpang-gi-pa, Ti-lo-pa.
(b) Pha-rgyud bka'-babs Gsang bdag, Sa-bcu-dbang-phyug Bo-gros-rin-chen, Klu-sgrub, Ma-tang-ga, Ti-la-pa.
(c) Ma rgyud rmi lam gyi bka' babs, Su-ma-ti Kun-tu-bzang-mo, Thang-lo-pa, Shing-lo-pa, Karna-ri-pa, Ti-lli-pa.
(d) 'Od-gsal gyi bka' babs Phyag-na-rdo-rje, Dombi He-ru-ka, Bi-nā-sa, La-ba-pa, Indra-bo-dhi, Ti-lli-pa.
Cf. pp. 6-23.

9. For an account of the names of the Rngog family lineage of Spre'u-zhing, please see *Blue Annals* pp. 406-414.

Bka'-brgyud-pa i.e TSHAL-PA, KAM-TSHANG, 'BA' RAM, and PHAG MO-GRU-PA, were disciples of either Sgam-po-pa or Dwags-po Sgom-tshul.

1 The Tshal pa Bka' brgyud-pa

Zhang G yu-brag pa Brtson-'grus-grags-pa (1123-1193), a disciple of Dwags-po Sgom tshul established the TSHAL PA BKA'-BRGYUD PA The fortunes of this sect reached a peak during the early Yuan period when Tsnal Gung-thang was the centre of an influential myriarchy. Because one of the myriarchs had been an opponent of Ta'i-si tu Byang-chub-rgyal mtshan, the sect fell into the shadows. The discovery of the *Sems khrid*, a *gter ma* alleged to have been concealed by Sgam-po-pa by Dung mtsho-ras pa Shes rab rgyal-mtshan in 13.5 brought the sect closer to the Rnying ma-pa

2. The Kam tshang or Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa

What is today the leading sect of these traditions and schools, the KAM-TSHANG or KARMA BKA' BRGYUD-PA, was founded by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa (1110-1193) The sect grew into the dominant church of Tibet during the late 15th, 16th, and early 17th centuries It suffered great hardships following the establishment of the Dge-lugs-pa theocracy through the power of Mongol arms. The leading incarnations of the sect are the Rgyal-dbang Karma pa and the Zhwa-dmar, the Rgyal-tshab, the Si-tu, the Dpa' bo, and the Tre bo tulkus[10]

Two subsects have branched off from the Karma pa, but there have been far fewer fissions than one might have expected A possible explanation might be the well-developed organisation of monasteries coupled with the prestige of the great incarnations[11]

The ZUR-MANG BKA'-BRGYUD-PA was founded by Rma-se rtogs-ldan Blo-gros rin chen, a disciple of Rgyal-dbang V De-bzhin gshegs pa (1384-1415). This sect controlled the Zur mang complex of monasteries in Khams. Rma-se rtogs-ldan's chief teaching was the *Bde mchog mkha' 'gro'i snyan rgyud nor bu skor gsum*

The GNAS-MDO BKA' BRGYUD PA began with Mahas grub Karma chags-med a student of the Sixth Zhwa dmar Gar-dbang-chos-kyi dbang-phyug (1584-1630). Karma-chags-med served as a *gter-bdag* for a number of Rnying ma pa *gter-ston*,

10. Please see Lokesh Chandra *The Autobiography and Diaries of Si-tu pan chen* New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968 pp. 20-23 of the introduction) for lists of the chief Karma-pa incarnations

11 Kong-sprul Blo-gros-mtha'-yas *Ris med chos kyi byung gnas mdo tsam smos pa blo gsal mgrin pa'i mdzes rgyan* f. 9r of the Dpal-spungs print) has given a survey of the origins Karma-pa convents that represents them as an organic unity

gdan sa ni stod lung mishur phu karma ri gling kam po gnas nang ste sku gsung thugs kyi khor to gsum shar phyogs spungs ri dang tre kam khyim yon tan gyi gnas par ra dang grwa ma gru bzhi phrin las kyi gnas te, de las gyes pa i dgon gnas gtsug lag gis sa chen po i khong thams cad khyab cing

Perhaps a study of the alignments and allegiances of the earliest Karma-pa convents will reveal the factors that suppressed the fissiparous tendencies in the Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa With such brilliant and individualistic thinkers as we find among the six great incarnation lamas and their disciples one would expect much greater fragmentation as a result of rivalries yet we find nothing of the sort

consequently, the Gnas-mdo shows strong Rnying ma-pa influences. This statement holds true for the Zur-mang sub-sect as well. The Gnas-mdo and Zur mang teachings enjoyed a great deal of popularity in Khams

3 The 'Ba' ram Bka'-brgyud-pa[12]

The third of the *che bzhi* was founded by Dar-ma-dbang-phyug Among the great names of the sect one should remember 'Gro-mgon Tshul khrims ras pa This school was popular in the Nang-chen principality of Khams The 'Ba' ram pa sect and the Tshang gsar dpon family enjoyed a special relationship Unfortunately, the *gser-'phreng* of this sect did not come out of Tibet During the late 19th century, the Ba'-ram-pa tradition almost completely was absorbed by the Rnying ma-pa gter ma methods discovered by Mchog-'gyur-gling-pa

Mention should be made of one other disciple of Sgam-po-pa who founded a minor sect that has since disappeared Gsal-stong Sho sgom[13] Kong sprul notes that the descendants of Sho-sgom were still to be found as the lamas of G.ye phug in his day The characteristic precepts seem to have merged with those of the Rnying-ma-pa

PHAG MO-GRU PA AND THE CHUNG-BRGYAD

The fourth disciple of Sgam-po-pa who founded a separate school was Phag-mo-gru-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po (1110-1170) The major *gdan-sa* quickly became hereditary in the Rlangs family The main PHAG GRU BKA BRGYUD-PA became closely connected with the Gdan-sa The and Rtses-thang complex As the secular affairs came to outweigh religious concerns, the Phag mo-gru-pa teachers evolved into patrons rather than practitioners The teachings transmitted by Sgam-po-pa to Rdo rje-rgyal po continued to be practiced in the sects founded by Phag-mo-gru pa's disciples Later Tibetan scholastics enumerated eight lesser branch schools (*chung brgyad* or *zung bzhi ya brgyad*) that had split off from the main Phag-gru tradition : 'BRI STAG, KHRO GLING, SMAR G.YEL, and G.YA SHUG

A The 'Bri-gung ('Bri khung) Bka'-brgyud-pa

Founded by 'Bri-gung Skyob-pa 'Jig-rten mgon-po (1143-1217), the BRI GUNG BKA' BRGYUD-PA remains one of the most interesting sects because of the content of its teaching and its contribution to the political chaos that plagued Tibet during Yuan and Ming times Several sects branched off from the 'Bri-gung-pa, perhaps the most important of which was the LHA PA BKA'-BRGYUD PA founded by Rgyal ba Lha-nang pa (1164-1224) This sect became the chief rival of the Brug-pa for the domination of Bhutan

B The Stag lung Bka'-brgyud pa

The STAG-LUNG BKA'-BRGYUD PA goes back to Stag lung-thang-pa Bkra

12. Also 'Bab rom Bka'-brgyud-pa
13. Cf *Ris med chos 'byung*, f. 9v
nnyam med dwags po'i thub mtsan gsal stong sho sgom grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po'i gyur cung mi ma yin du ba'i phrin las can du lung bston pa'i tar gro don mtha' as pa bsk'yangs.

shis-dpal (1142-1210) Because of intrigue by the Sa-skya-pa lamas and chieftains, one of the scions of the Ga-zi lineage, Sangs rgyas-dbon (1251-1296) was forced to flee Stag-lung In 1276 he founded Ri-bo-che The Ri-bo-che branch of the Stag-lung Bka'-brgyud-pa became almost a separate sect Like the 'Bri-gung Bka'-brgyud, both of the Stag-lung traditions have been strongly influenced by Rnying ma-pa teachings since the 15th century

C. The Khro phu Bka' brgyud-pa

The KHRO-PHU BKA'-BRGYUD-PA traces its origin to Rgya tsha'[14] (1118-1195), a student of Phag mo-gru-pa, and Kun-ldan-ras pa (1148-1217) Their nephew was the famed Khro-phu lo-tsā ba Byams-pa-dpal who hosted Kha-che pan-chen's visit to Tibet The sect had ceased to have an independent identity well before the 17th century. Bu-ston hailed from this lineage

D The Gling ras Bka' brgyud pa and the Brug-pa sects

The numerous BRUG-PA BKA' BRGYUD-PA transmissions passed through Gling ras-pa Padma rdo rje (1128-1188) to Gtsang pa Rgya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211) The 'Brug pa sects take their name from the convent of Gnam 'Brug founded by Gtsang-pa Rgya ras This guru also founded both Klong-rdol in Skyid-smod and Rwa-lung, the monastic complex that was to become the major seat of the Rgya prince abbots, the hierarchs of the Brug pa sects

The most important of the teachings peculiar to the 'Brug-pa center around the *Ro snyoms skor drug*, a gter ma teaching concealed by Ras chung and rediscovered by Gtsang pa Rgya-ras Another of Gtsang-pa Rgya-ras productive systems of precepts was the *Rten 'brel* an esoteric presentation of the *pratītyasamutpada*

The chief monasteries of Gtsang pa Rgya-ras passed to his nephew, Sangs-rgyas Dbon-ras Dar-ma-sengge (1177-1237/8). The Rgya clan continued to preside at Rwa lung until 1616, when Ngag-dbang-rnam-rgyal (1594-1651), a recognized incarnation of Padma-dkar-po and the scion of Rgya, was forced to flee to Bhutan because of the enmity of the House of Gtsang. During this period, Rwa-lung was the centre of the BAR 'BRUG school over which the hierarchs of the House of Rgya ruled It was a student of Sangs-rgyas Dbon-ras, Pha-o 'Brug-sgom zhig po who first introduced the teachings of Gtsang pa Rgya ras into Bhutan

Following the flight of Ngag-dbang-rnam rgyal, Rwa-lung and its affiliates were seized by the Gtsang authorities and later turned over to the control of Dpag bsam-ldbang po a rival of Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal, for recognition as the rebirth of Gtsang-pa Rgya-ras and Padma dkar po (1527-1592) The centre of the BYANG 'BRUG now shifted to Padma-dkar-po's monastery of Byar-po Gsang sngags chos-gling, Rwa-lung fell into decay The unresolved dispute over the recognition of the rebirth of Padma-dkar-po is the primary cause for the split of the BAR BRUG into the Northern (BYANG 'BRUG) and Southern (LHO 'BRUG) branches

There were minor traditions that originated from four disciples of Gtsang pa Rgya ras Spa ri-ba Mkhyen pa'i-bdag-po, Rkyang mo sha-pa, Rgya yags-pa, and Bras mo-pa The only one of these that had any significance was the RGYA-YAGS BKA'-BRGYUD-PA

14 Or Rgyal tsha see *Blue Annals*, p 705 et ff

The two major offshoots of the 'Brug-pa tradition were the STOD 'BRUG founded by Rgod tshang-pa Mgon po-rdo rje (1189-1258) and the SMAD 'BRUG established by Lo ras-pa Dbang-phyug brtson-'grus (1187-1250). The Smad 'Brug need not concern us too much The Stod 'Brug however gave rise to a host of important schools the NE-RINGS BKA BRGYUD-PA, the MDO-BO-CHE-BA, and the YANG-DGON BKA'-BRGYUD-PA among others

The Yang-dgon school produced ultimately the 'BA'-RA BKA'-BRGYUD-PA, a sect that had maintained an identity up to 1959. It is to a branch lineage of the 'BA' RA BKA'-BRGYUD-PA sect that the *gser-'phreng* here reproduced belongs.

E The Smar-pa (Dmar-pa) Bka'-brgyud-pa

Smar-pa grub-thob Shes rab-sengge founded Sho-dgon in Khams, the mother convent of the SMAR-PA BKA'-BRGYUD PA The sect achieved a degree of influence in Eastern Tibet.[15] Although it has since ceased to exist as an identifiable entity, certain of its teachings until recently continued to be practiced at the Nyingmapa convent of Dpal-yul.[16]

F The Yel-pa (Ye-phug-pa) Bka'-brgyud-pa

Grub-thob Ye-shes-brtsegs-pa, the disciple of Phag-mo-gru-pa from whom the YEL-PA BKA' BRGYUD-PA originated, founded the convents of Lho Ye-phug and Byang Rta rna After a brief period of influence in the localities where its convents were located, the sect declined During the 18th century, this already extinguished tradition received a stimulus for revival thanks to Sa-skya pan chen's efforts at restoring the ancient monastery of Rta-rna The special teachings of the Yel-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa have merged with the Kam tshang tradition

G The G ya' bzang (G yam-bzang) Bka' brgyud-pa

Zwa-ra ba Skal ldan Ye-shes-sengge (d 1207) founded the monastic establishment of Zwa-ra in Central Tibet. His chief disciple, G ya'-bzang chos-rje (1169-1233), founded the monastery of G.ya'-bzang in 1204 and thus began the G.YA'-BZANG BKA'-BRGYUD-PA, a school that enjoyed a period of greatness as the sect pre-dominant in the myriarchy of the same name The ill fortunes that plagued its *khri-skor* could not but help to plunge the G ya' bzang sect into a process of gradual decline Nevertheless, the convent itself remained a major religious centre until at least the 16th century

H The Shug-gseb Bka'-brgyud pa

Founded by Gyer-sgom chen-po, the SHUG-GSEB BKA'-BRGYUD-PA had for its chief religious establishment the convent of Shug gseb in Snyi phu. Another

15 Among the more famous names associated with the Smar-pa tradition we find Rgyal-ba Yang-dgon Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan, Rna Ring-chen-gung-pa, Smar mkhan-chen Od-zur-bla-ma of Spang, and 'Gro-mgon Shing-mgo-ras-pa Affiliated convents included Ring-rgya dgon (founded by Sgrub Chos-'od and Rgya thang.

16. According to Kong-sprul further, the teacher responsible for spreading Smar-pa Bka' brgyud-pa teachings to Dpal-yul was Stag-bu bla-ma

of Phag-mo gru pa's pupils, Par-bu pa Blo-gros-sengge, was a significant enough an influence on Gyer-sgom that the distinctive feature of the Shug-gseb school was its exegesis of the doha texts that incorporated the interpretations and insights of a Mahamudra transmission passing through Vajrapāṇi, Mnga' ris Jo-stan, and Gru shul ba. This tradition later merged with the Karmapa [17]

Finally, one should mention, at least in passing, a tradition that has been responsible for some of the charges that Tibetan tantric teachings are heavily influenced by Kashmiri Shaivism. O-rgyan pa Sengge-dpal (1229-1230-1309) and the U-rgyan Bsnyen-sgrub. Although O-rgyan pa was a disciple of Rgod-tshang-pa, the essential practices of O-rgyan-pa were received from a dākini in Oḍḍiyana. Consequently, scholars like Kong-sprul have treated this tradition as distinct from both the Dkar-brgyud pa practices and the Kālacakra system. The Karma-pa preserve many of the precepts transmitted by O-rgyan pa to Rang-byung rdo rje, but essentially the approaches of the Phyag-rgya-chen-po and Nā-ro chos-drug are quite distinct from those of the U-rgyan Bsnyen-sgrub [18]

THE MANUSCRIPT

The *Bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* reproduced here was in all probability compiled and calligraphed during the last half of the 15th century. This illustrated manuscript belongs to the Kushok of Takna who has graciously granted permission for its reproduction. Much of the compilation is the work of Mon-rtse-pa Kun-dga'-dpal-ldan (1408-1475?), a guru whose autobiographical reminiscences and mystical experiences fill the last forty folia of our manuscript. The colophon[19] indicates that the credit for the manuscript redaction should go to one Kun dga'-'brug dpal of the Klong-rdol Hermitage in Skyid-shod (Central Tibet)[20], probably an immediate disciple

17 See Guenther, *The Royal Song of Saraha*, pp. 15-20, for a brief account of the origins of the Shug-gseb exegesis.

18 See *Blue Annals*, pp. 696-705.

19 See p. 591.

tshe tshad gong du stan pa ltar
lugs gcig la ni re brgyad yin
dam nyams rkyen gyis phrog pa la,
nges pa mi 'dug tshad ma thungs
des snga dag kyang dam sel gyis
gdong zhud rkyen ngan la rten pa'i,
de sh de ltar thag pa byung
da dung de lta yong shas che
che kyang gyod dang mtsher ba med
sngon gyi las dbang yin la che
di brtse dge bas rdo rje chang thob shog! dben gnas klong rdol gling stod 'od gsal sgang du
snyams las pa kun dga' brug dpal gyis brtsams pa'o.

20 The Klong-rdol Hermitage was established by the founder of the 'Brug-pa sect, Gtsang-pa Rgya-ras (1161-1211). This convent was quite close to Lhasa. At some stage it became Dge-lugs-pa and ultimately gave its name to the great 18th century scholar, Klong-rdol bla-ma Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang.

of Mon-rtse pa. If this supposition holds, the manuscript cannot have been written much later than 1500. The artistic flavour of the miniatures and the curious manuscript hand would seem to bear out this dating, unfortunately, the charming illustrative portraits have come out badly in the reproduction.

Mon-rtse-pa belonged to one of the Ba'-ra transmission lineages of the Yang-dgon group of the Stod 'Brug subsect of the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud-pa. Although we know little of the later history of this transmission, we find the famed historian, Padma-dkar-po (1527-1592), writing in 1575:

> *de'i (Yang-dgon-pa'i) slob ma spyan snga rin ldan dung nas 'khrungs lha gdong na sprul pa'i sku bzhugs zhes gsan nas mos gus skyes dgung lo bcu gcig pa zhig gis phyag phyir byon de nas ma gshegs bar spyan sngar bzhugs pas spyan snga zhes grags so*
>
> *de'i slob ma zur phug pa rin chen dpal bzang de'i slob ma chos rje 'ba' ra ba ste shangs kyi chab lung par dpon 'bum zhes pa'i sras su 'khrungs gzhon nu nas chos rje bla ma dam pa bsod nams rgyal mtshan pa'i gsol bya ba mdzad gsan pa 'ang legs par mdzad de nas nges 'byung drag po 'khrungs nas chos la bros zur phug pa las dkar brgyud kyi gdams ngag gsan te bsgoms pas rtogs pa mchog tu gyur 'ba' ra brag tu don grub sdings btab de las slob brgyud kyis bod kun bkang*
>
> *yang slob mon rtse ba zhes pa las mched nas 'brog dbus kong po sogs su dar dbus smyon kun dga' bzang po las kyang mang du mched gdan sa nas dbon brgyud kyis bzung ste de dag las kyang grub pa'i skyes bu tshad med pa byung ste stod 'brug gi rkangs 'ba' ra ba ta thug go*[21].

As more *rnam-thar* and similar sources become available, it is likely that we shall one day be able to piece together an account of how this tradition developed and then merged with other schools or completely disappeared. The last four biographies in this collection have a certain degree of historical importance, it may be of some

21 Cf. *Tiberan Chronicle of Padma-dkar-po*. Edited by Lokesh Chandra. New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968, pp. 594-95.

'His (the Yang-dgon-pa's) disciple, Spyan-snga Rin-ldan, was born at Ding-ri. He heard that an incarnation body was dwelling at Lha-gdong and faith and reverence were born. He came as an attendant when he was a bare seven years of age. Because he remained an attendant *spyan-snga* thenceforth until Yang-dgon-pa's death, he was known as Spyan-snga.

"His disciple was Zur-phug-pa Rin-chen-dpal-bzang. His student was the Dharmaswāmin 'Ba'-ra-ba, who was born at Chab-lung-pa in Shangs as the son of Dpon 'bum. From his youth he served as the cook for Bla-ma Dam-pa Bsod-nams-rgya-mtshan (1312-1375). He also attended well to what Bla-ma Dam-pa had to teach of the dharma. Therefore, a strong repulsion towards the world was manifested and he fled to seek the dharma. From Zur-phug-pa he heard the Dkar-brgyud precepts. Through meditation, he achieved an exceptional yogic insight. He founded (this) hermitage of Don-grub-sdings at Ba'-ra-brag. The teaching lineage that came from him filled the whole of Tibet.

'From a disciple's disciple, one called Mon-rtse-ba, it branched out and spread through the nomadic regions ('brog) as well as in Dbus and Kong-po, etc. From the 'Madman of Dbus' (*Dbus-smyon*, Kun-dga'-bzang-po, b. 1458) also emerged numerous branches. His seat at Don-grub-sdings was taken over by his nephews and their descendants. Among these there were immeasurable (numbers of) accomplished beings. The various strands of the Stod 'Brug came together in the Ba'-ra-ba.'

interest to note a few of these points in passing[22]

'BA'-RA-BA RGYAL-MTSHAN-DPAL BZANG (1310[23]-1391?)[23]

The biography of 'Ba'-ra-ba affords an excellent example of the way in which the hagiography (*rnam-thar*) functions as a commentary on a reverential petition (*gsol-'debs*) It has already been suggested that the *gser-'phreng* as a genre originated from an attempt to explain in comprehensible prose the import of the various liturgical petitions to the gurus in a transmission lineage of a specific esoteric precept[24] An illustrative example is the description of 'Ba'-ra-ba's literary activities.

gdul bya sna tshogs srid las sgral phyir du
,mdo'a rgyud stan chos man ngag dgongs 'brel mdzad
theg pa sna tshogs rgya cher gsal mdzad pa'i
chos rje rin po che la gsol ba 'debs[25]

This śloka is elucidated :

ces pa ni 'gro ba'i skyabs mgon thugs rje chen po dang ldan pas gdul bya dbang po sna tshogs pa srid pa du kha'i rgya mtsho las sgral ba'i phyir thar pa'i gru bo che la sogs pa'i stan chos dang phyag rgya chen po dang na ro chos drug la sogs pa'i man ngag dang bsam mno'a bcu gsum dang bdag med gnas lugs ma la sogs pa'i drang don gyi mgur dang sems mtha' bral ma dang gtad med bzhi la sogs pa'i nges don gyi mgur ma la sogs pa i theg pa sna tshogs rgya cher gsal bar mdzad cing bdag med rtogs pa'i spyan dang ldan pas thugs rab phul du phyin cing mdo'a rgyud ma lus pa'i dgongs pa gsal bar mdzad pa'i chos rje rin po che la gsol ba 'debs so

'Ba'-ra ba's teachers included, besides Zur-phug pa, many of the greatest names of the time: Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo rje (1284-1339), Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364), Rgya sras Thogs-med (.295 1369), and Bla-ma Dam pa Bsod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375) In this text one should note how far the concept of the recognized rebirth (*yang-srid*) had progressed by the middle of the 14th century 'Ba'-ra-ba was regarded as the re-embodiment of Yang dgon pa (.2,3-1258) Rgyal-sras Thogs-med

22 An outline of the contents of the entire *gser-'phreng* will be found immediately following this introduction.

23 There are several different sets of dates for Ba'-ra-ba Probably the one most compatible with other accepted dates is that found in the *Blue Annals* p 692 .310-1391 Dhongthog *Important Events in Tibetan History*, p. 40 gives 1255-1343 Our manuscript p. 480 gives only *chu-tug* 343 or .403 for the death and notes that the great guru was 82, nearing 83, at the time of his demise This would lead us to the calculation that Ba-ra-ba was born in 1261 or 132. It has seemed useful to accept tentatively 1310-1391 until researchers establish definitive chronologies

24 See p . above

25 Please see p 469
I bow at the feet of the precious Dharmaswāmin,
Who, in order to deliver the sundry candidates from the wheel of existence,
Has explained the intention of sutra, tantra, shastra, and precept,
Enumerating in great detail the various vehicles."

of Dngul-chu in 'Jad was hailed as the emanation of the Bodhisattva Zla-ba-rgyal-mtshan, while the Shangs pa Dkar brgyud-pa guru, Mkhas grub Tshul khrims-mgon-po had been recognized as the emanation of Khyung po rnal-'byor[26]

KLONG-CHEN-RAS-PA RIN CHEN-TSHUL-KHRIMS

'Ba'-ra ba's immediate disciple, Klong-chen-ras-pa, was born at Do. Lha-sna in southeastern Tibet He studied with both 'Ba'-ra-ba and Ri-pa Gzhon-nu-rgyal mtshan (1348-1390), the other of Zur phug pa's two chief disciples. Klong chen-ras-pa spent time at both Sna-phu and at Lha-sa, where he met 'Ba'-ra-ba He meditated for a long time at Dmar rtse the convent with which his name is most commonly now associated

He travelled extensively throughout the border lands into which the Bhotia peoples had begun to intrude Mang-yul and the Nepal Valley, Rtsib ri, Glo-bo, Gung-thag, Spu hrangs, Tsa-ri, and Spa-gro[27] in Bhutan The account of the epidemic in which Klong chen ras-pa almost perished gives a vivid picture of the perils that highlanders faced when they descended into the Valley in quest of religious teachings That the author draws a connection between the fever epidemic and "bad" water is rather interesting[28] Klong-chen ras-pa received new teachings connected with the Cakrasamvara Tantra from a Nepal. master Ma-ha bho dhe

The manuscript notes that Klong-chen ras-pa attended on the thirteen year old Karma pa Rol-pa rgyal-mtshan on the occasion of the latter's travels in Dbus[29] This must certainly be the Fifth Rgya. dbang Karma pa, De bzhin-gshegs pa (1384-1415), but the statement that he had been born in Kong-po is puzzling Most sources give his birthplace as Nyang 'Dam

KHRUL ZHIG GLO-'KHAR-BA KUN-DGA' DON-GRUB

GLO-'KHAR-BA[30] Kun dga'-don-grub the disciple of Klong-chen-ras pa, was born in southeastern Tibet He belonged to the Bdog clan His father, Bla-ma Sher-gzhon came from a family of village tantric priests, the Bdog lun-pa of Sbus-ri. His mother was a nun Kun dga'-don grub received his early education at Ra-ma dgon in Gzhung Although he did meet 'Ba'-ra-ba at least on one occasion, he did not have the good fortune to receive the 'Brug pa precepts in toto from him His studies were rather eclectic, he requested Jo-nang pa, and Sa-skya-pa teachings as well as those of many of the different Dkar-brgyud-pa traditions

26. Please see p. 472.

27 'Ba'-ra-ba founded the monastery of 'Brang-rgyas-kha in the Spa-gro Paro region of Bhutan.

28. See p. 491

de lo chu ngan pa 'dug pas tshad pas mi mang rab shi , ,

29. See p. 496

da dmar rtse la gre bsam rtsa na skar ma pa rol pa rgyal mtshan kong por ska 'khrungs gung lo brgyad gsum bzhes pa gcig dbus su phebs kyi yod zer ba thos rol pa rdo rje'i dus su ang ma nga bar 'gyod ca mya du 'gro dgos snyam nas mi shur phar phyin lha val bsam yas gdan sa the tsa nogs su gdan 'dren byung pa phyags phyir phyin

30 A number of variants occur Glo-khar-ba, Bo-khar-ba, Glo-'khar-ba etc

MON RTSE-PA KUN DGA'-DPAL-LDAN (1408-1475?)

With the autobiographical and mystical writings of Mon rtse pa we come to the most interesting and significant portion of this compilation. Mon-rtse-pa's style is graceful and his verse demonstrates a mastery of the idiom of folk poetry. He often succeeds in making his reader feel what 15th century Tibet must have been. His song lamenting the Civil War of 1434[31] is an exquisite example of his poetical style:

nyer bdun lon pa'i stag lo la[32]
phag mo gru pa'i dus 'khrug sangs
dbus gtsang dmag gi 'tshog 'du rnams
phal cher dol gzhung gnyis su byas
dmag chen gtsang dmag gnyis kar gyis
'grim lam ba ri sgang la byung
khang khyim thams cad bshus sregs byas
yul grong rnams mi gyang rar btang
sgur chags thams cad gri ru kum
phal po che rnams sprang por btang
grag rims rnams mi mthon gyis kum
snyoms chung rnams tsho ltogs drir shi
grong pas grong pa brdung pa'i dus
pha bu spun zla yin kyang mi
phar tshur dos chad rme 'khrug byed
mi bsad pa la stong med cing
nor khyer ba la snyags med pas
thu thu sbyag sbyag brdungs nas su

31 The Civil War of 1434 has been dealt with briefly by Mme. Ariane Macdonald in "Preambule a la lecture d'un Rgya-Bod yig chan" in *Journal Asiatique* 1963. 1434 marks the beginning of the Rin-spungs-pa paramountcy.

32 See p. 522.

"In the Tiger year 1434 when I was 27
The Phag-mo-gru-pa troubled times erupted
The levies of the armies of Dbus and Gtsang
In a large sense divided Dol and Gzhung in two
The route of march for both the Great Army
And the Gtsang Army came through Ba-ri-sgang
All the houses and homesteads were put to the torch,
The farming settlements were turned into cattle enclosures
All the subservient were slaughtered on the knife,
Ordinary folk were turned into beggars
The powerful slew and were slain by the sword,
The weak perished upon the knife of hunger
Villager was thrashing villager. At such a time,
Ties of father and son and brother and brother were of no consequence
Back and forth raged bitter feuds and defining vendettas
No wergeld was exacted for the slaughter of men
No pursuit was organized to follow the looted property

khver 'phrogs bsad gsum dus 'da' 'khrug
me rnams gar khyar 'di 'khyar med
rtsa rud 'khrug rnams jag ske'a 'chos
ni ma 'dzes kyi skal 'khrug gcig
de dus su ni 'khrus pa yin
de lta'i dus kyi sems can tshos
mi 'ong pa'i du kha bsams tsa na
da lta dran kyang 'chi ma bro

Mon-rtse-pa belonged to the southeastern borderland He was born at Khang-dmar gling in Ba ri sgang between Do. and Gzhung. In his autobiographical account he tells us a good deal about the nature of his beloved native place, the character of his father and of his mother, and of the background of his lineage He is able to draw us into his world, to make us feel his spiritual experiences.

A certain amount of time is required to get accustomed to the handwriting and orthography of this manuscript Unfamiliar *bsdu-yigs* abound Unusual spellings turn up quite frequently *Gha* in place of *'ga'*, 'some', is a regular feature of the latter part of the manuscript The little effort that is required will be amply rewarded not only in the new insights that one will gain in comprehending life in Tibet over 500 years ago but also in the understanding that will be gained about the evolution and development of the *rnam-thar* as a literary form and as a summary of profound spiritual precepts.

I me passed in looting, banditry, and murder
Who cared whoever wandered and strayed?
The pasturage dried up, the fields became drying weeds
Whatever small fortune there had been in the sun in the centre (Dbus
At that time was bleeding out
When I think of the suffering experienced
By sentient creatures at that time,
Even the memory of it now makes me almost weep."

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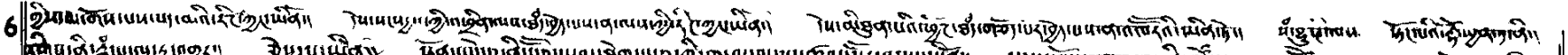

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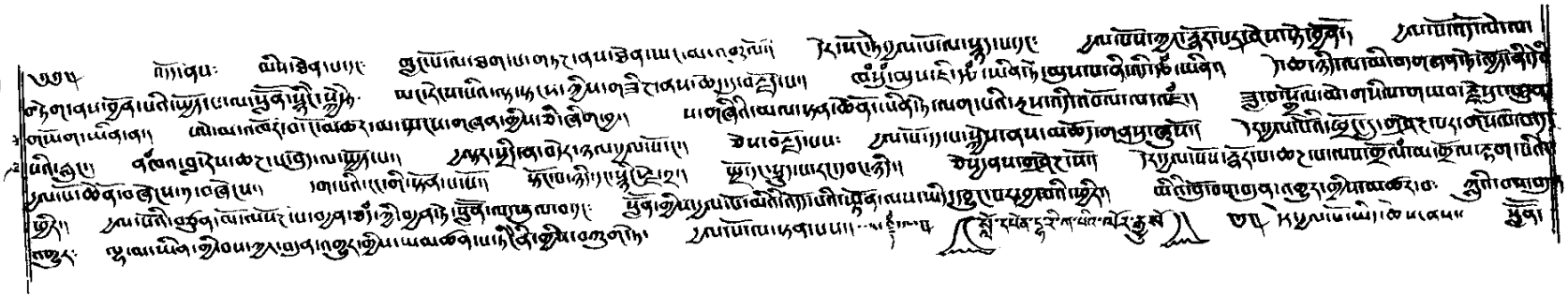

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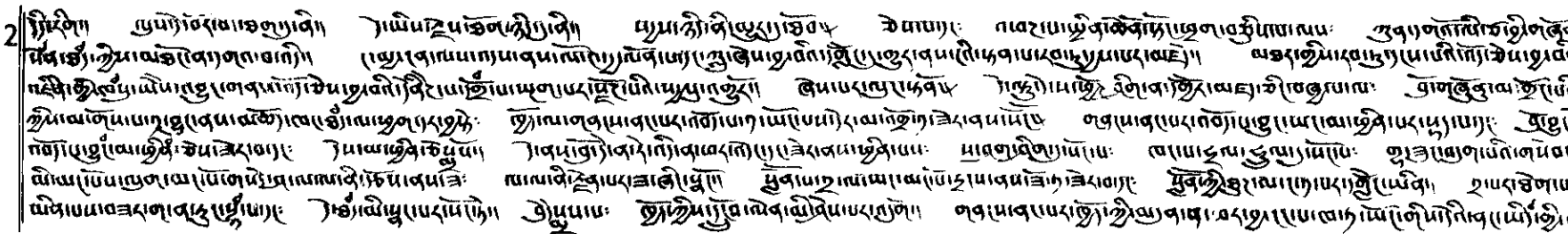

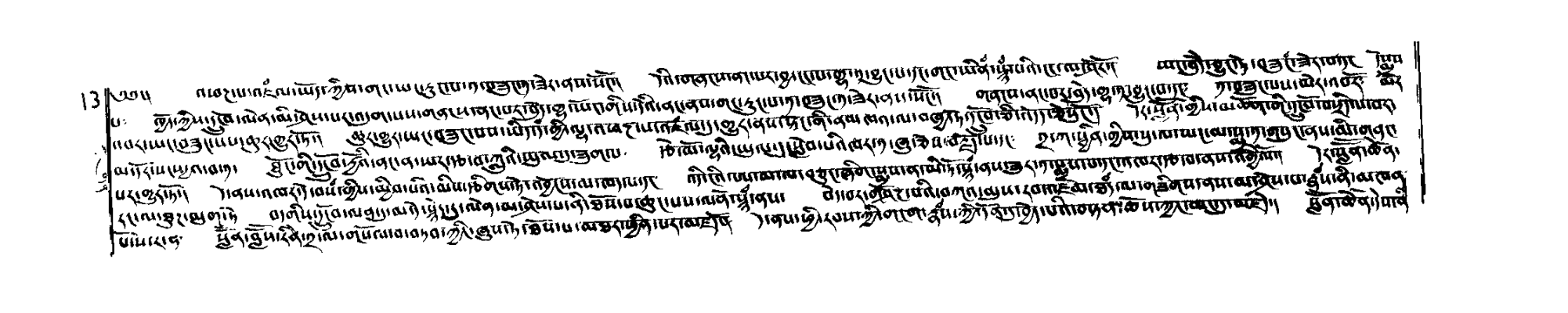

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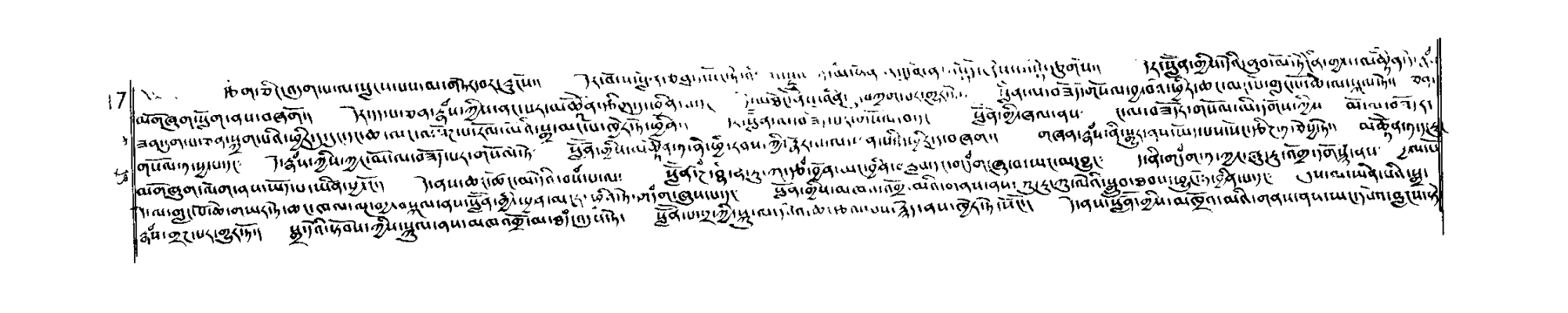

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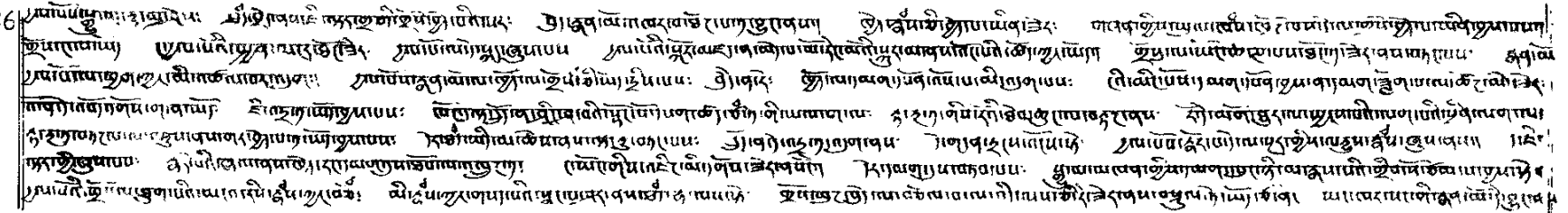

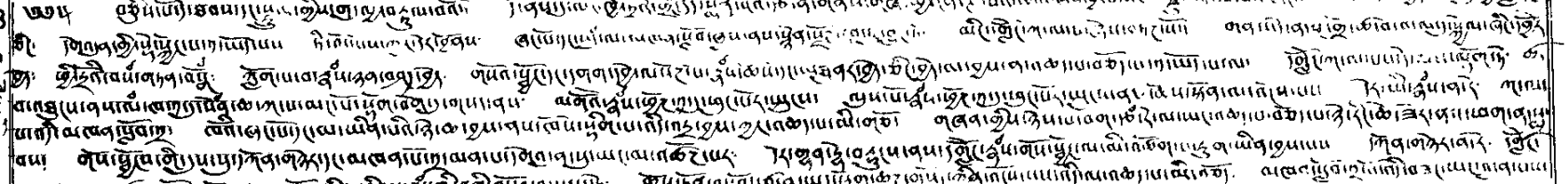

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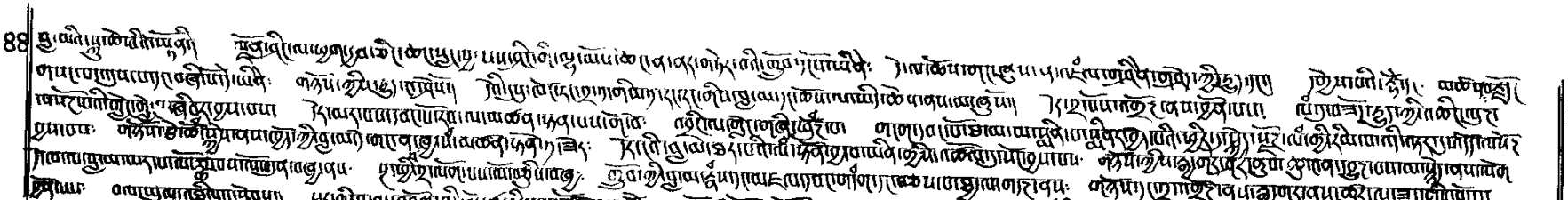
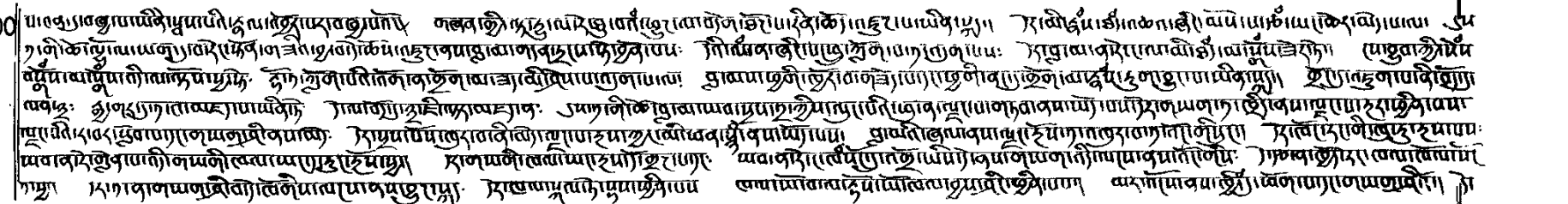
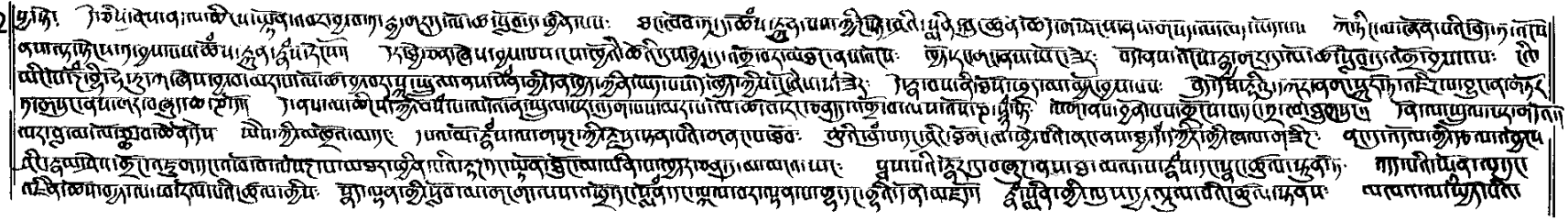
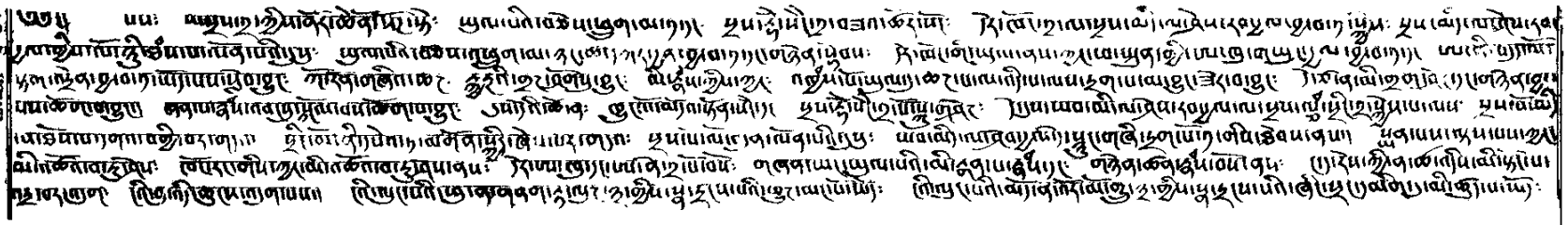
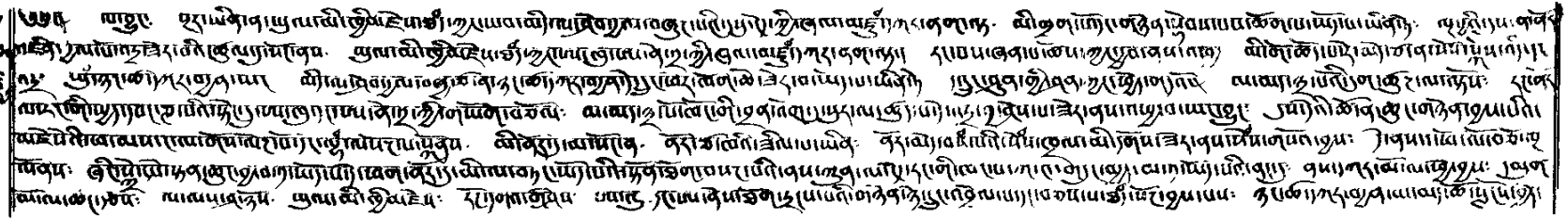


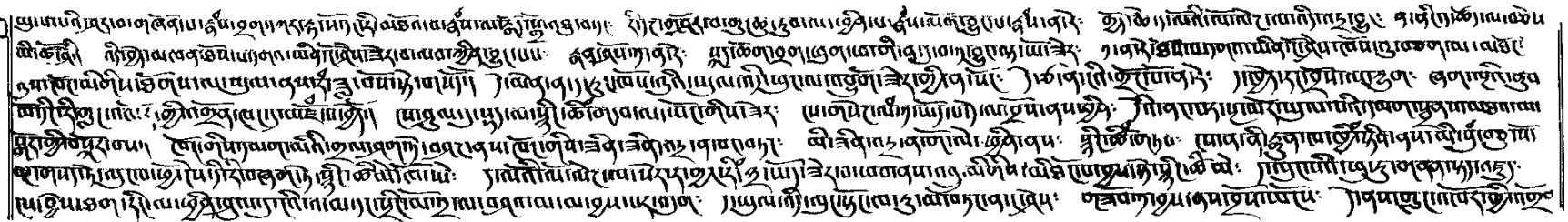


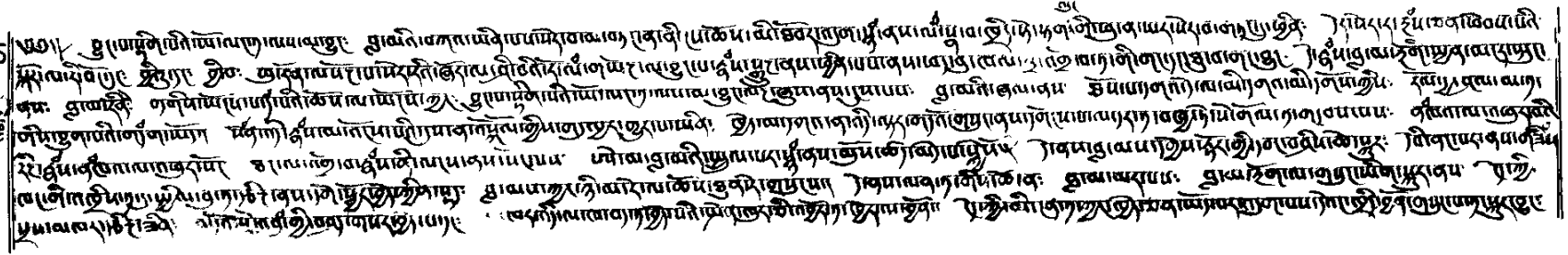


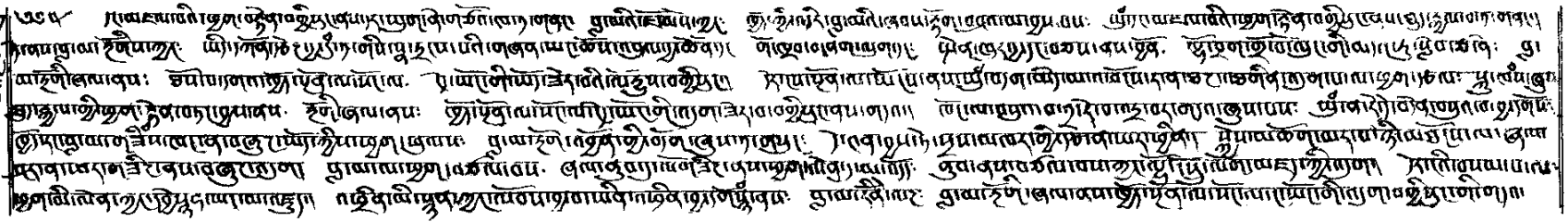




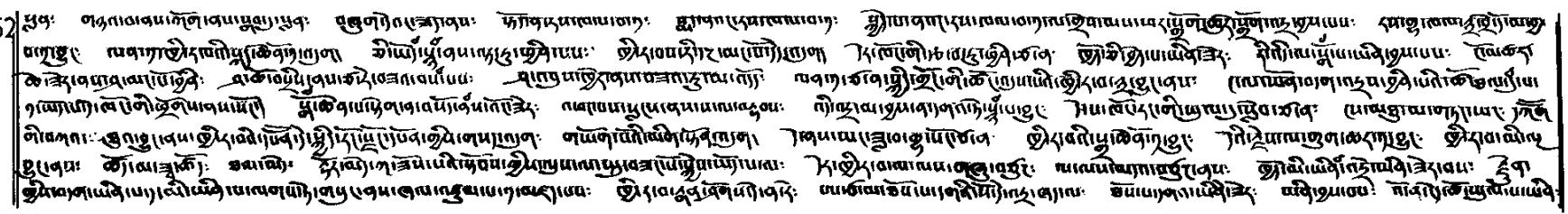
ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་ཡི་ཞིང་ཁམས་ཀྱི་ཐ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།







ཀཀཀ ཤིཤི ཤིཤིཤི



154 [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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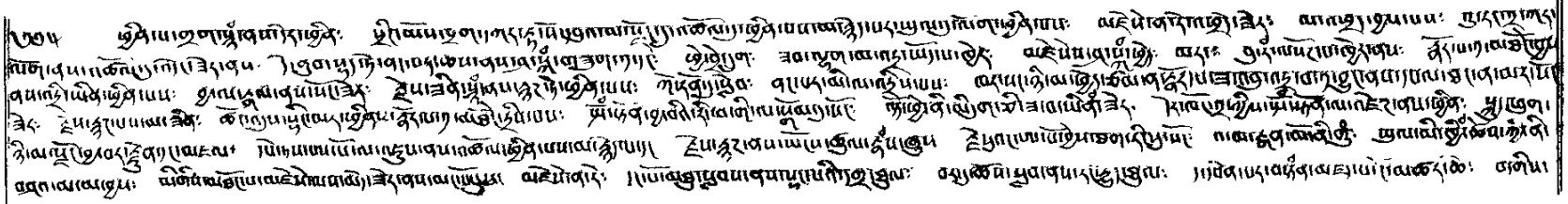
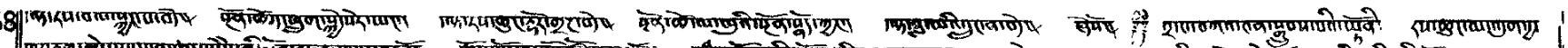
[illegible]

སྙིང་མོ་དེ་ཏ་མཆོག་ཀྱི་དེ་ཁྲལ་བ་ཞིམ་ན་ལྡང་གི་ཡོད་པས་ཐོས་ནས། །ཁོ་རེ་ཀུན་རྒྱལ་བཙོང་པ་དེ་མཆོར་ཅན་ཞིག་ཡོད་པར་འདུག་དྲུ་པ་ངས་ དེ་ཁྱིད་རང་གི་ཨ་ཕོ་ཐོས་པ་དགའ་ འདུག་ཞུལ་བས།།





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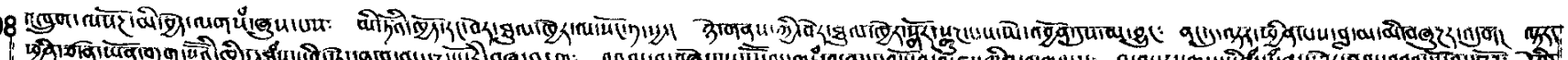

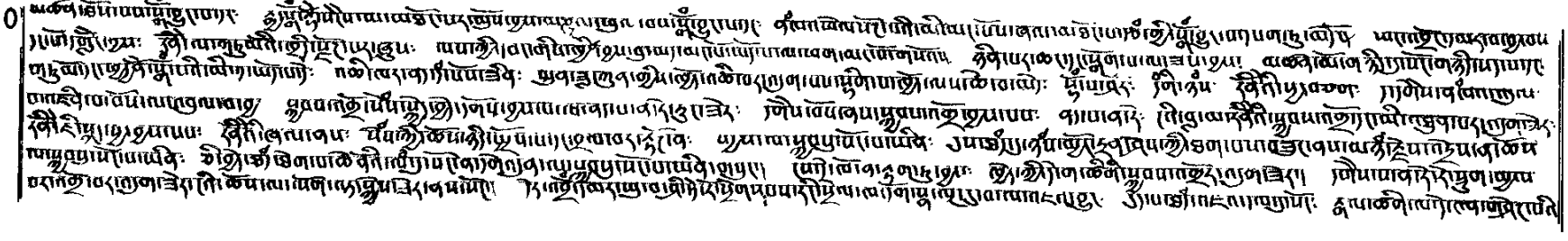

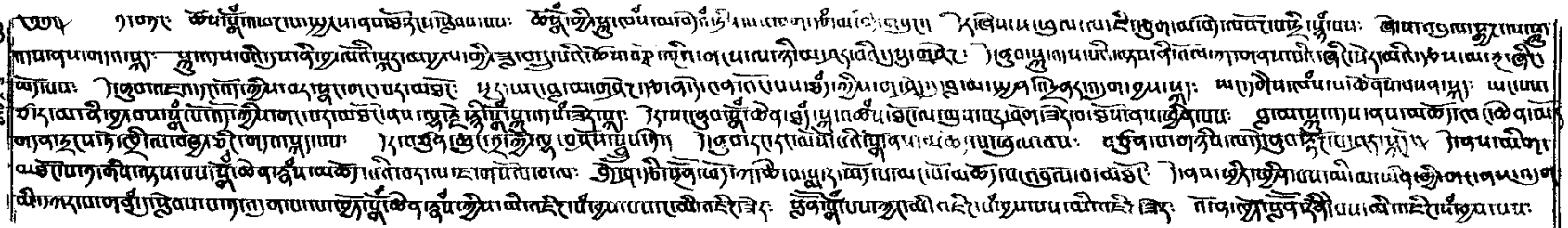

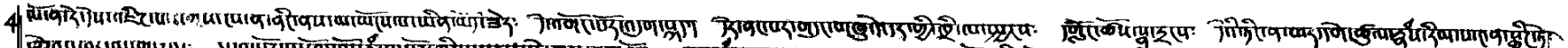

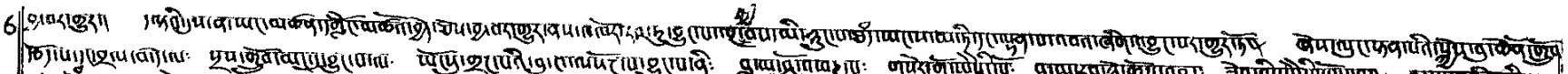

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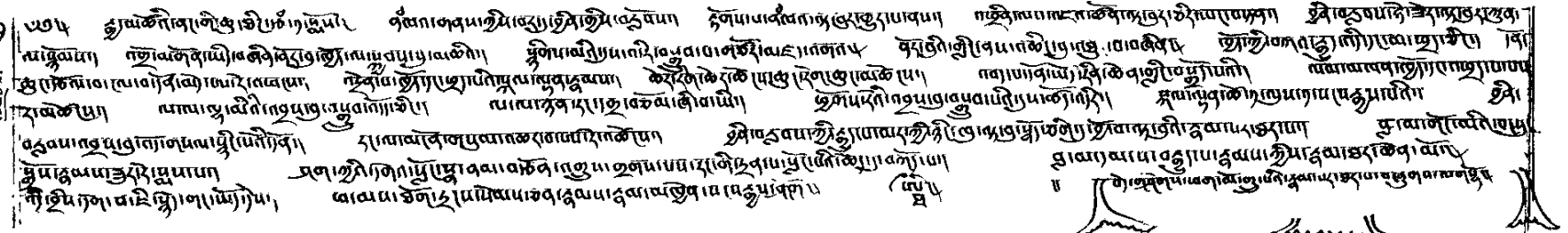
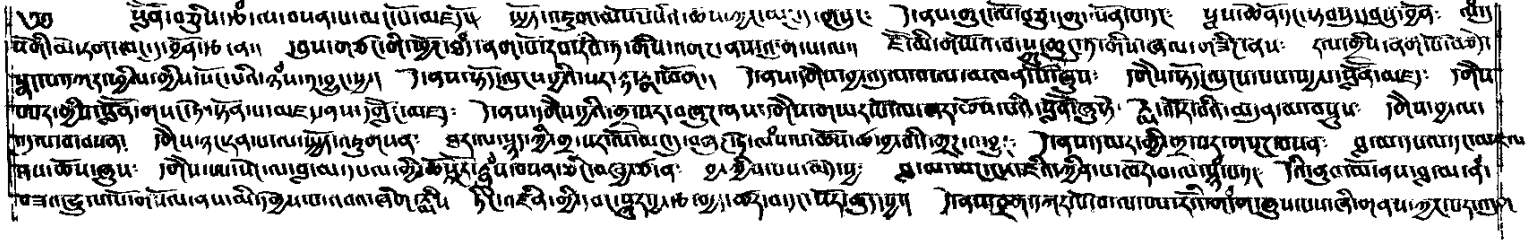
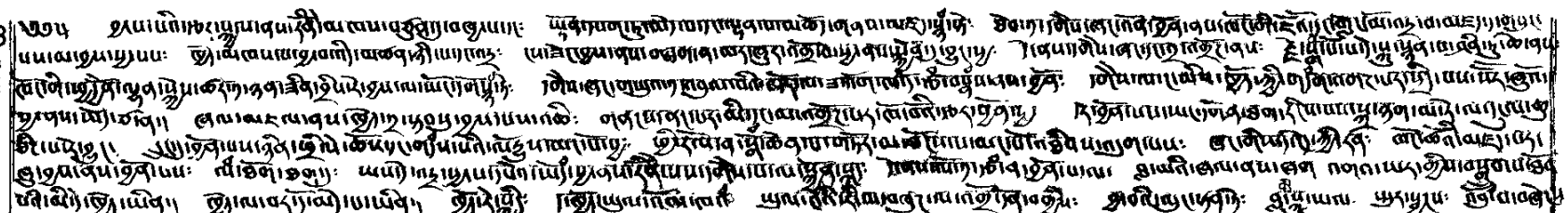
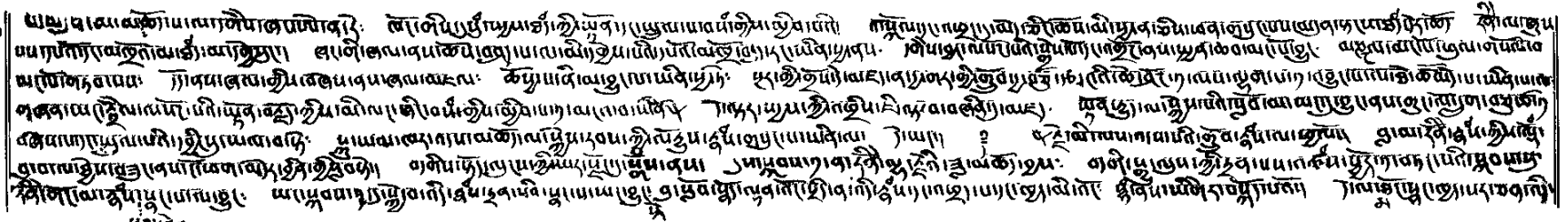
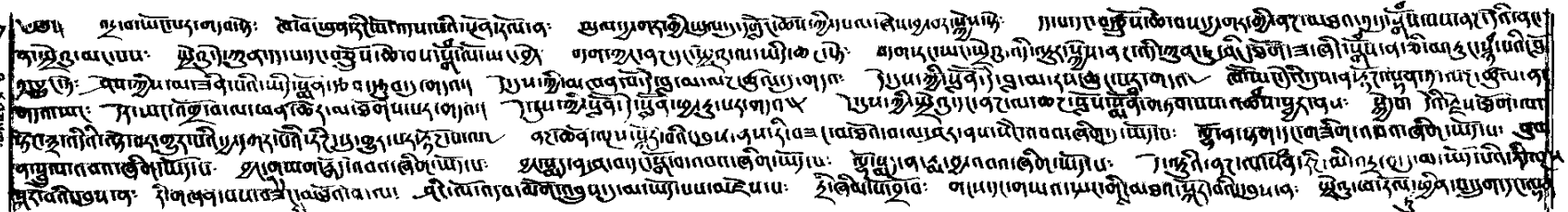
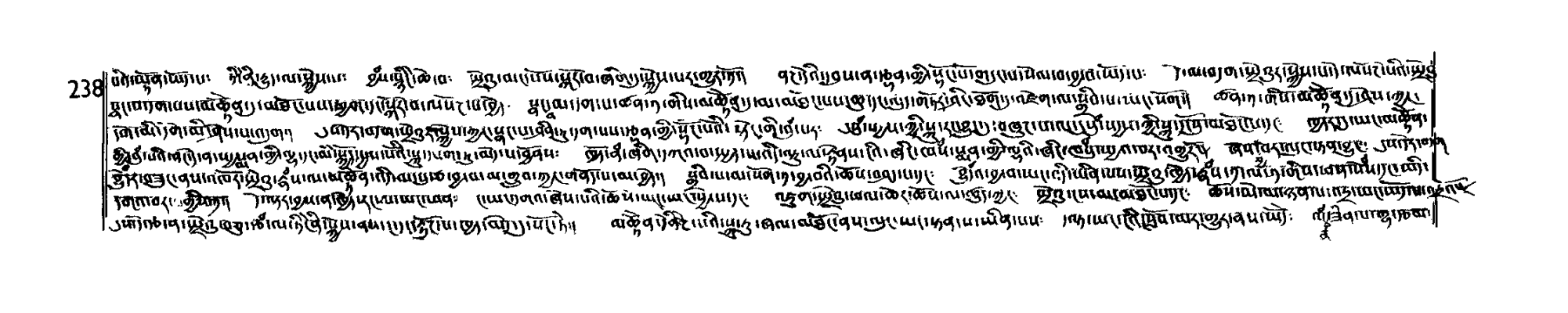


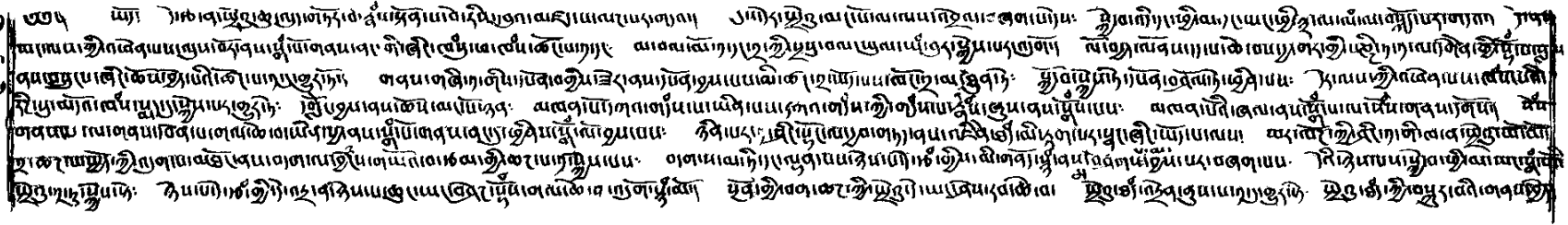


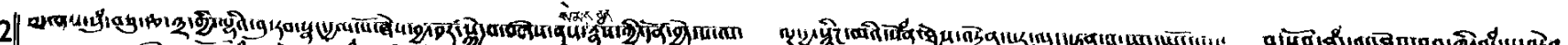


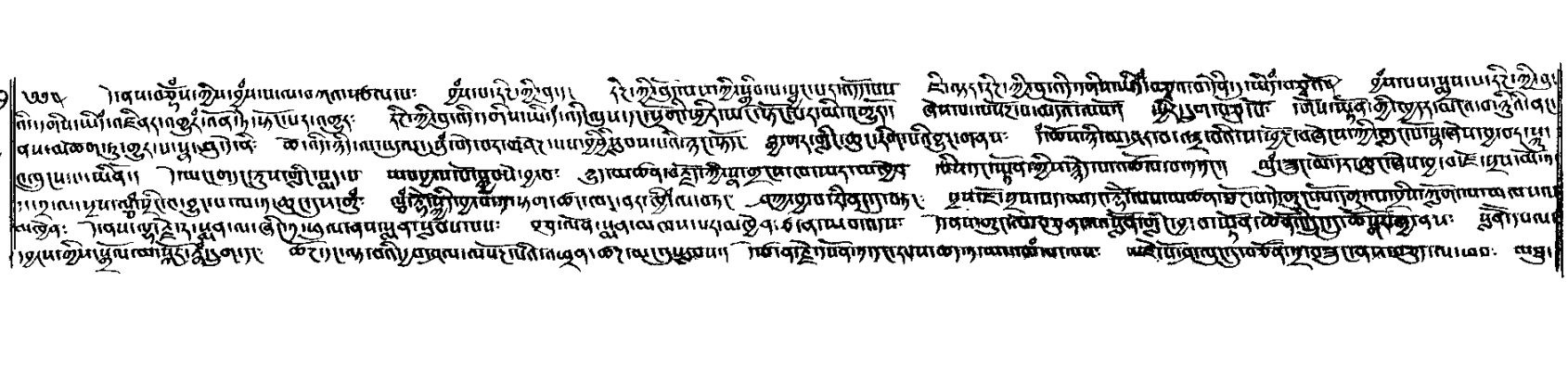


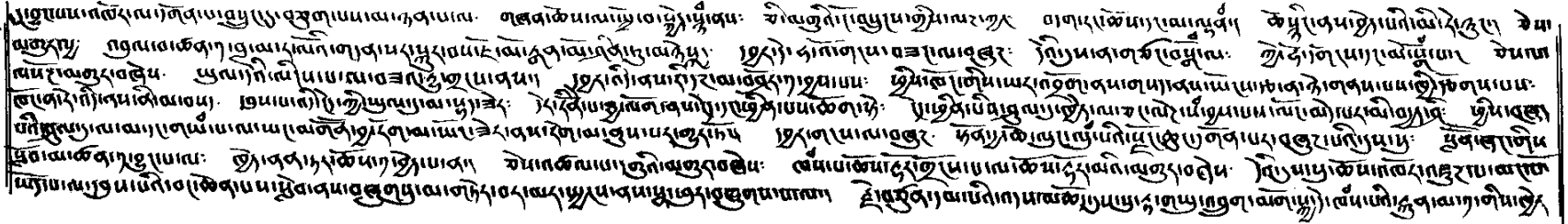




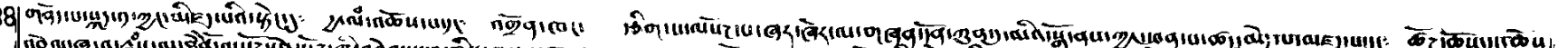








ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ།



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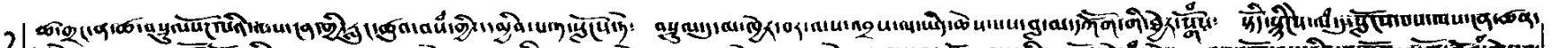
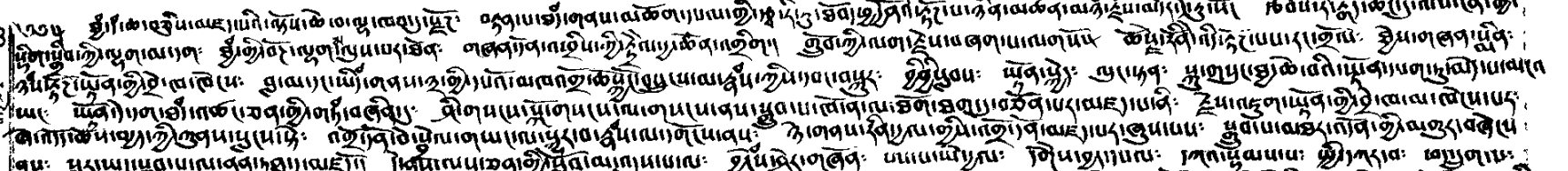
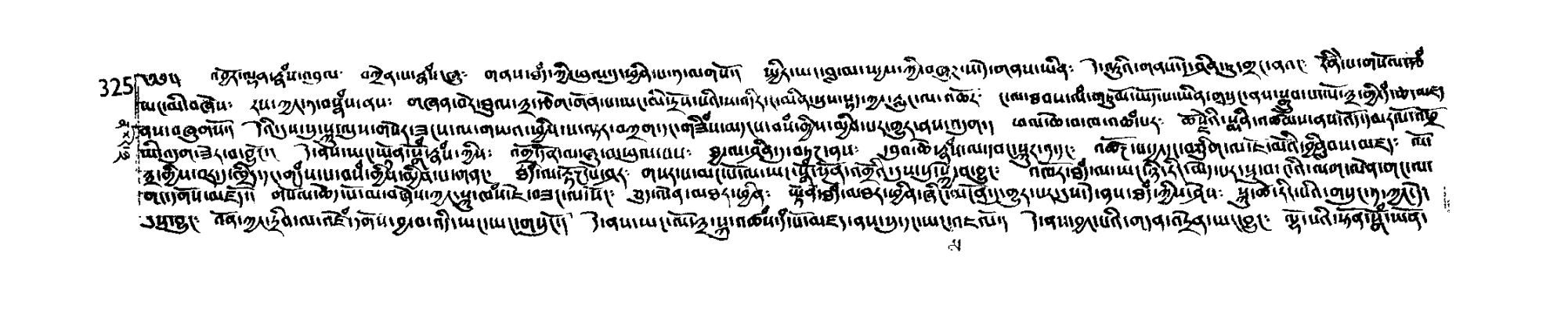
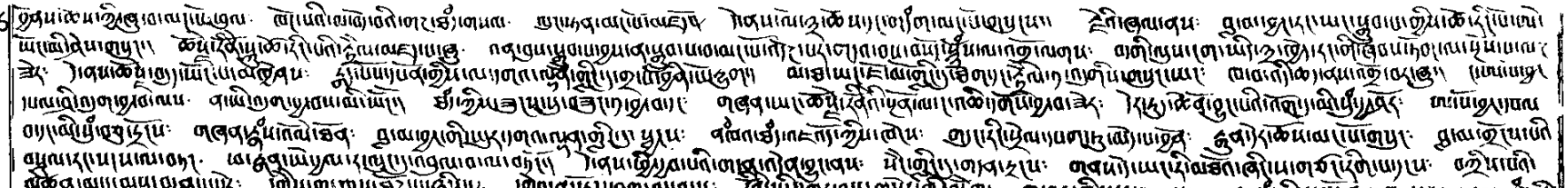
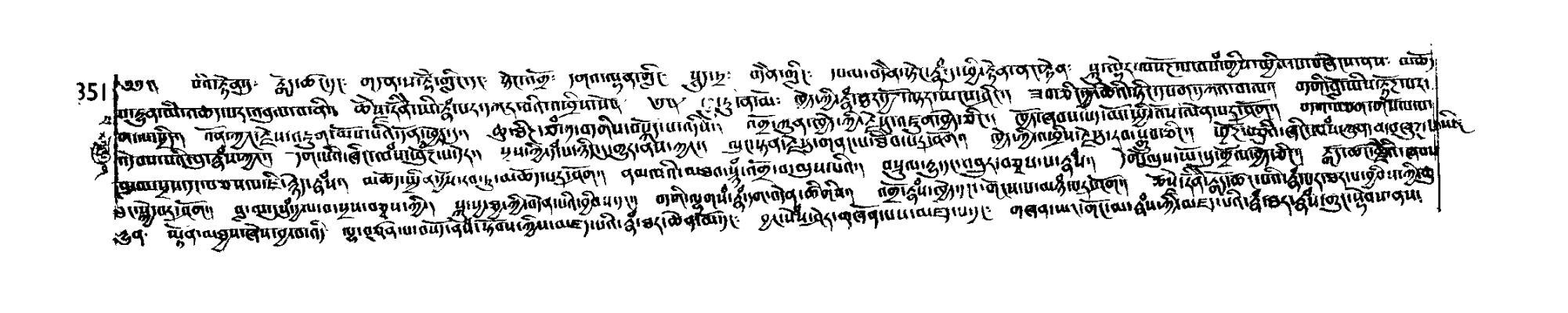
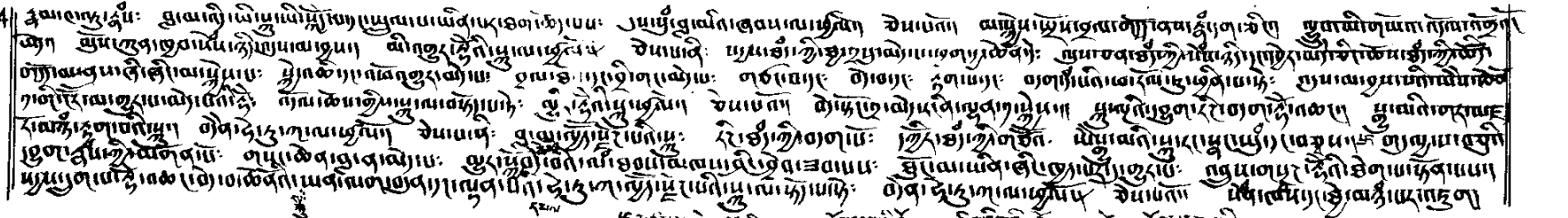






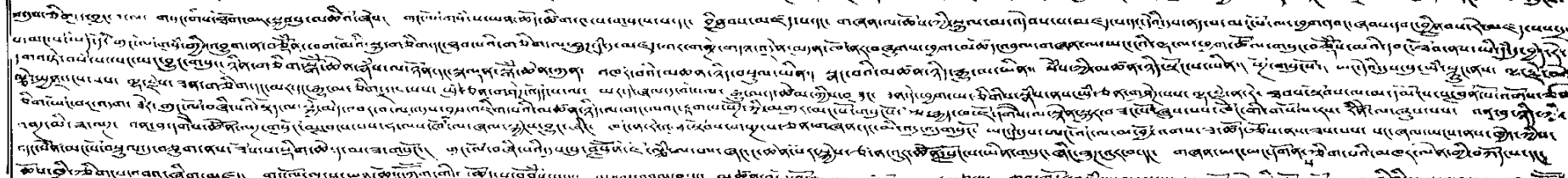




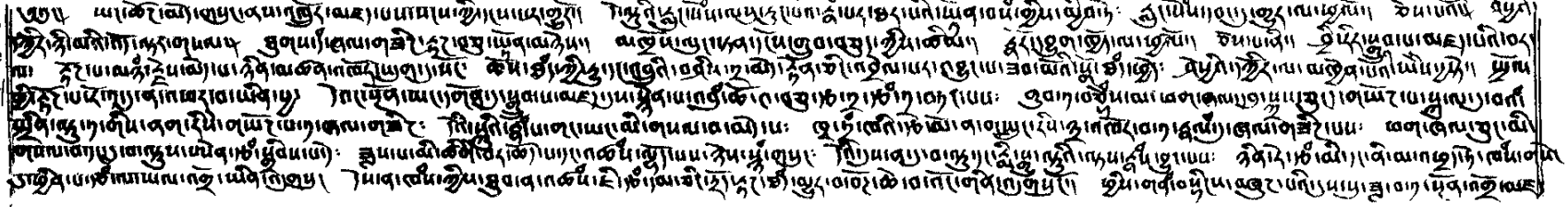


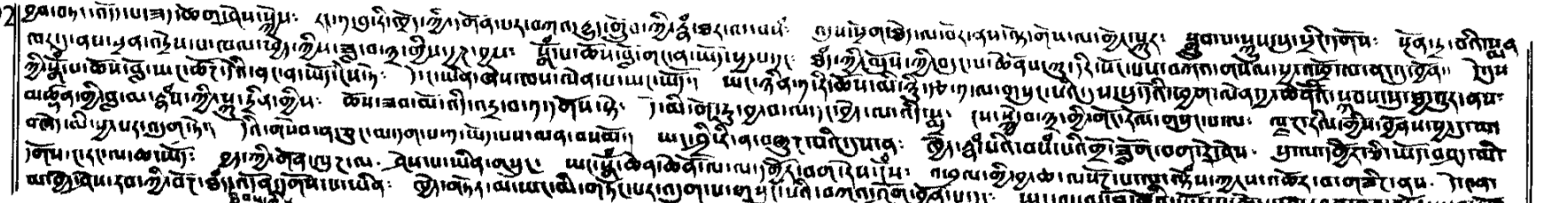
360

12



ཐབས་ ། ཁྱིམ་བདག་ཅིག་ཡོད་ཅིང་། ཁྱིམ་བདག་མོ་དང་། བུ་གཅིག་དང་། ཁྱིམ་ཚང་ཡོད་པ་ལས། ཁྱིམ་བདག་ཕོ་ཉ་ཆུང་ཞིག་ཏུ་ཁྱིམ་བདག་མོ་ཤི་ཏེ





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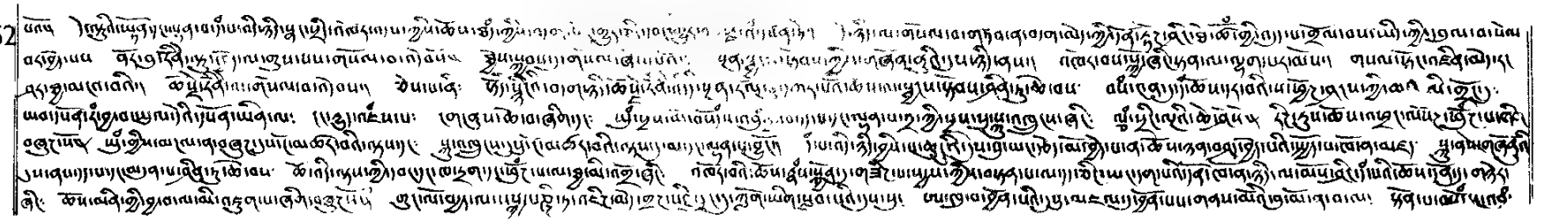

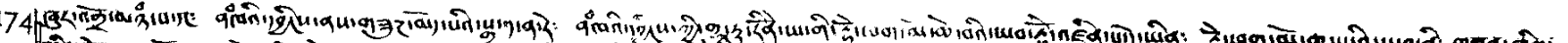

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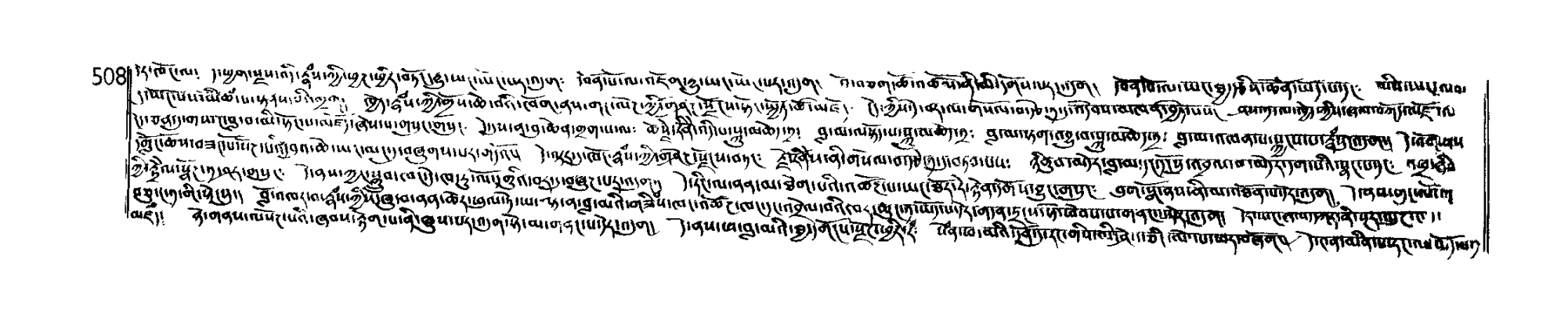

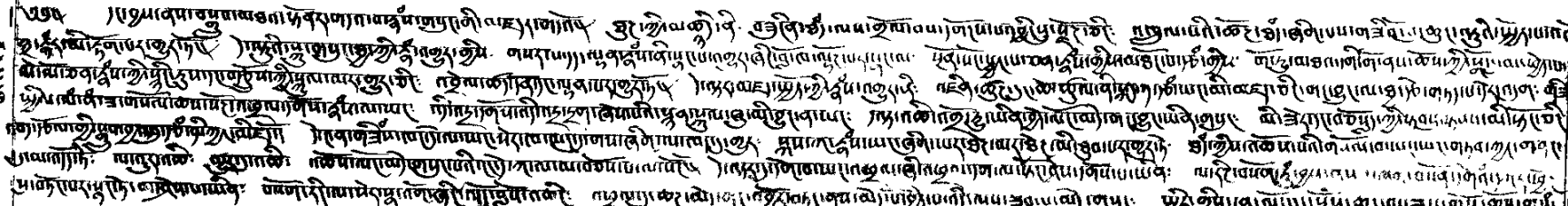

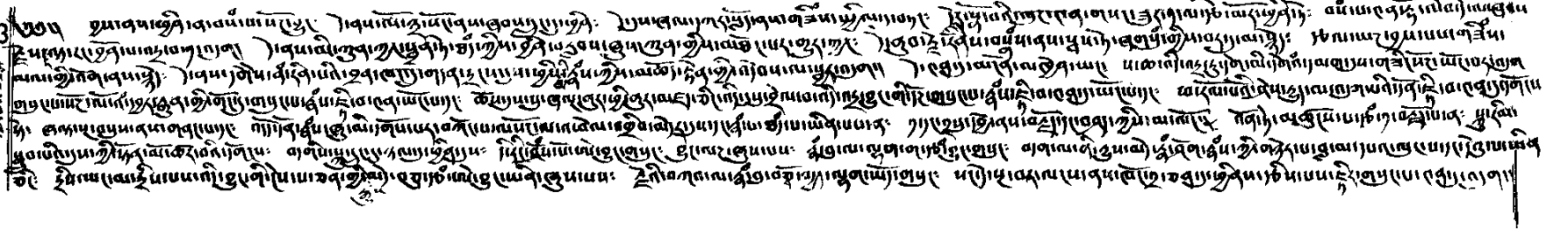

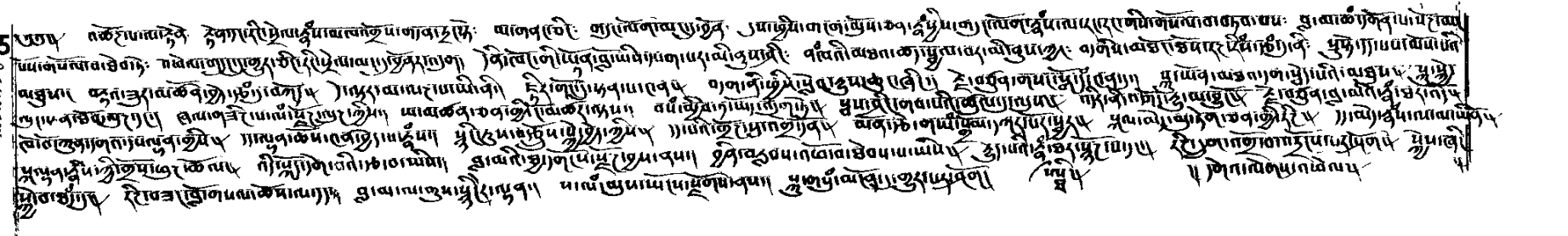

ཀུན་ཏུ་སྤྱོད་པ་ཡི་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི

ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

Tripathi

ཀྱི་ཚིག་ཏུ་ཡང་ཡང་ཞེས་པ་ནི་ཐེ་ཚོམ་ཟ་བ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཐེ་ཚོམ་ཟ་བ་ཡང་ཡང་ཞེས་པ

ॐ नमो भगवत्यै आर्यतारायै ॥ नमः सर्वबुद्धबोधिसत्त्वेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतपद्मकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतवज्रकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतमणिकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतकर्मकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतबुद्धकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतधर्मकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतसङ्घकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतमहाकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतसत्यकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतसत्यकुलेभ्यः ॥ नमः सर्वतथागतसत्य

ཐུབ་པའི་དབང་པོ་ཡིས་ཀྱང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡིས་ཀྱང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡིས་ཀྱང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཡང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཡིས་ཀྱང་། །ཐུབ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཡ

ཀུན་བཏུས།

ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཏུ་ཡོངས་སུ་བསྔོ་བ་ཡིན་ནོ། །ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ནི་

ઉપાસ્યાનાં ગુણોનું ચિંતન કરવું તે ધ્યાન છે. ધ્યાનમાં ધ્યાતા, ધ્યેય અને ધ્યાન એ ત્રણેનો ભેદ રહે છે. ધ્યાતા ધ્યેયમાં તન્મય થઈ જાય ત્યારે ધ્યાન ધ્યાનરૂપે રહેતું નથી પણ સમાધિરૂપ બની જાય છે. ધ્યાનમાં

ಶ್ರೀ ಗುರುಭ್ಯೋ ನಮಃ

ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ୧୨ ପାଦ ୩

ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ୧୨ ପାଦ ୩

ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག་བཞི་ཚང་བའི་ཕྱིར་རོ། །ཇི་ལྟར་ན་ཡང་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི